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Wincanton Rural District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year Ending 31st December, 1942.

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WINCANTON,
SOMERSET,
June, 1943.

TO THE

RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WINCANTON.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to lay before you my Annual Report for the year 1942.

1.—General Statistics.

Area (in acres)	64,540
Population (Pre-war)	17,390
Number of inhabited houses (1931) ...	4,361
Number of families or separate occupiers (1931)	4,385
Rateable Value	£72,680
Produce of Penny Rate (estimated) ...	£300

2.—Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

BIRTHS.

		Males.	Females.		
	Total	148	153		
Live Births	Legitimate	142	144	Birth Rate	15.8
	Illegitimate	6	9		
	Total	6	7		
Stillbirths ...	Legitimate	6	7	Birth Rate	0.54
	Illegitimate	—	—		

DEATHS.

	Total	Males.	Females.		
Deaths from all causes	237	116	121	Death Rate	11.6

Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, childbirth :—

(*a*) from sepsis .... nil.
(*b*) from other causes ... 1

Deaths of Infants under one year of age :—

Legitimate 7 Illegitimate — Total 7.

Deaths of Infants under one week	3
,, ,, from one to four weeks (inclusive)	3
,, ,, from one to six months	1
,, ,, from six to twelve months	—
Total	7

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	.... nil
,, Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	nil
,, Diarrhœa (under two years of age)	...	...	nil

There has not been any excessive mortality during the year.

3.—Notifiable Diseases during the Year.

DISEASE.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Diphtheria	4	1	1
Scarlet Fever	32	28	nil
Enteric Fever	1	1	nil
Pneumonia (all forms)	21	nil	4
Abortus Fever	nil	1	nil
Whooping Cough	37	nil	nil
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	nil	nil
Acute Poliomyelitis	1	1	nil
Measles	39	3	nil
For Observation	nil	5	nil
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis	1	nil	nil
Tuberculosis	21	?	11
(*a*) Respiratory	11		8
(*b*) Non-respiratory	10		3

In addition to cases mentioned above, 3 cases of Streptococcal Septicœmia were admitted to the Isolation Hospital.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

Cases			Vision un-impaired	Vision impaired	Total Blindness	Deaths
Notified	Treated					
	At home	In hospital				
1	1	—	1	—	—	—

4.—Causes of Sickness.

Measles and Whooping Cough were again somewhat in evidence throughout the District, but the number of cases notified was far less than in 1941. The type of both diseases was mild and there were no deaths.

Cases of Scarlet Fever were rather more numerous than usual, but the cases were of a mild type and there were no deaths.

5.—Summary of Nursing Arrangements, Hospital and other Institutions available in the District.

A.—Professional Nursing in the Home.

(1) *General.*—There are ten nurses in the district engaged in general district work who are affiliated to the County Nursing Association, and between them they cover the whole district.

(2) *For Infectious Diseases.*—Some of the cases of infectious diseases were removed to the Isolation Hospital, the remainder were either nursed by their relatives or by nurses obtained from Nursing Homes or Hospitals outside the district.

B.—Midwives.

There are ten certified midwives practising in the district.

C.—Clinics and Treatment Centres.

In Wincanton there is one Tuberculosis Dispensary provided and staffed by the County Council.

D.—Hospitals available for the District.

(1) *Tuberculosis.*—One at Wincanton.

(2) *Fever.*—One at Wincanton, to which the following cases were admitted during the year—

Disease.	Number Admitted.	Number Died.
Scarlet Fever	28	nil
Diphtheria	1	1
Measles	3	nil
Acute Poliomyelitis	1	nil
Enteric Fever	1	nil
Streptococcal Septicœmia	3	nil
Abortus Fever	1	nil
For Observation	5	nil
	43	1

(3) *Other.*—There is one Cottage Hospital at Wincanton, known as the "Wincanton and East Somerset Memorial Hospital," for the treatment of general, medical and surgical cases.

There is one Cottage Hospital at Templecombe, known as the "Merthyr Guest Memorial Hospital," for the treatment of general, medical and surgical cases; in addition, there are three wards available for Maternity Cases.

There is a Public Assistance Institution at Wincanton for the aged and infirm under the Public Assistance Committee.

E.—Institutional Provision for Unmarried Mothers, Illegitimate Infants and Homeless Children.

The only Institutions for any of the above are the Public Assistance Institution and Rodber House, Wincanton (for boys only), which are under the control of the Public Assistance Committee.

F.—Ambulance Facilities.

(1) *For Infectious Cases.*—A motor ambulance is kept at the Isolation Hospital at Wincanton for the collection and removal of infectious cases.

(2) *For Non-Infectious and Accident Cases.*—A motor ambulance, built and equipped by the Wincanton Rural District Council, is kept at Messrs. The Wincanton Transport and Engineering Co., Wincanton, Tel. 3262.

6.—Laboratory Work.

Examinations of bacteriological and pathological specimens are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory at Taunton, and considerable use of this laboratory has been made during the year.

A supply of diphtheria antitoxin is kept at the Isolation Hospital, Wincanton.

7.—Public Health Officers of the Local Authority.

There is one Sanitary Inspector and Housing and Sanitary Surveyor, and one Additional Sanitary Inspector (both whole time officers), a Public Health Inspector and myself (part time officers).

There are also 2 Health Visitors in the District.

8.—Water Supplies.

Wincanton.—The temporary chlorination apparatus has been replaced by a permanent one.

Castle Cary.—Two new reservoirs have been constructed and a new rising main has been laid linking the Pitcombe springs with the Castle Cary reservoirs.

Horsington.—Services have been laid to supply troughs to a number of fields at Horsington Marsh.

9.—Drainage and Sewerage.

Milborne Port.—Two new sludge beds have been completed and are working satisfactorily.

Sparkford.—The additions to the sludge beds have been completed. A flushing syphon has been constructed at the head of the sewer in Sparkford Street.

Camping Sites.

No Camping Sites in this District have been registered.

Generally the only cases of Camping which occurred were cases of 2 or 3 days duration.

No special difficulties in connection with Camping are anticipated.

10.—Housing.

(Particulars as regards overcrowding and as to sufficiency of houses to meet demand).

The amount of overcrowding generally is on the decline. There are still many houses in which conditions are unsatisfactory owing to large families occupying houses with few bedrooms and there remain many houses in which the number of occupants is small in proportion to the room available.

11.—Ministry of Health Enquiries.

None.

12.—Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(*a*) *Milk Supply.*

(1) Number of Producers on the Register 562

(2) Number of Distributors on the Register—

(*a*) Distributors who are also Producers 38

(*b*) Distributors only 6

(*b*) *Meat Supervision.*

Slaughter Houses—

Licensed 2

Formerly registered—now unused—Application for licence pending ... ... 14 Total 16.

Knackers Yards. Licensed ... ... 3.

Air Raid Precautions.

The Casualty Services under the Air Raid Precautions Act are still up to strength and ready for any emergency.

In addition to the Six First Aid Units and Two First Aid Points there has been formed a Dressing Station in each of the 32 Parishes in the District, these are adjoining or adjacent to the Rest and Feeding Centres (where these exist); they are staffed by an Officer in Charge (usually a lady with experience in First Aid and Home Nursing), and a varying number of Helpers; equipment has been and is being supplied by the County Council, the British Red Cross Society and by local effort.

Exercises in Air Raid Precautions involving the use of the Casualty Services have been held. These on the whole have been satisfactory.

The Report of the Sanitary and Public Health Inspectors are appended.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

T. E. COULSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

Council Offices,

Wincanton,

25*th June*, 1943.

T. E. COULSON, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.S.E.,

Medical Officer of Health,

WINCANTON, SOMERSET.

Sir,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ended December 31st, 1942.

The total number of inspections for the year was 3557.

The Public water supplies have been sampled regularly with the following results :—

Satisfactory	...	...	33
Not quite satisfactory	...	...	11
Unsatisfactory	...	...	1

Of the twelve samples which were not satisfactory, six were samples taken from the Wincanton supply after chlorination, every result showing the presence of bacillus coli.

Occasional water shortages have been reported in the Castle Cary district but this trouble has been dealt with. Water shortages have also been reported in the Stoney Stoke area.

Private Supplies. Samples have been taken of ten private supplies. Of these seven were satisfactory and three were not quite satisfactory.

Sewerage. Various repairs have been carried out to sewers at Alford, Cucklington, Stoke Trister, Templecombe and Wincanton. Two of these were the subject of a considerable amount of discussion with the County Surveyor. The discussions, however, eventually cleared up a position which for some time has been unsatisfactory, as agreement was reached which covered these and future cases of blocked or defective drains taking both road surface water and domestic sewerage.

A sewer defect at Bayford Hill, Wincanton, caused a road subsidence. It was found that this trouble was the direct result of bad design and inadequate supervision at the time a new sewer was laid to serve the first twelve of the Council Houses at Penn View. The presence of springs made the remedial work very difficult but the trouble was eventually cured by the provision of collection chambers, and laying of drains to take spring water to a storm water drain and the laying of a new 6in. sewer to a new manhole. During the course of this work, it was necessary to close the road to Penn View for a few weeks and to rebuild a retaining wall. The cost, almost £600, would have been very much less had the weather been less difficult.

Wincanton Sewage Works. The position at the Wincanton Sewage Works remains very unsatisfactory and a piped water supply has been extended to feed those riparian fields where the pollution is liable to render the water unfit for cattle to drink. Discussions have taken place regarding the possibility of executing works to provide temporary purification of the effluent pending the completion of the new sewage works after the war.

Housing. Owing to the shortage of labour and materials, only informal action has been taken under the Housing Acts.

The number of unfit houses licensed for human habitation increased from seventeen at the beginning to twenty-two at the end of the year.

The number of houses other than hostels requisitioned by the Council for the use of evacuees decreased from sixty-two at the beginning to fifty-four at the end of the year. Of the latter number thirty-one were unfit for human habitation, and, although a small amount of repair work had been executed, their condition generally compared unfavourably with that of similar houses licensed.

No case of bed bug infestation has been discovered.

Many cases of scabies have been notified to me and in Seventy-three cases (excluding those from hostels) bedding and/or clothing have been treated at the Isolation Hospital disinfector.

The usual disinfection of premises has been carried out after cases of infectious disease. Arrangements have continued to be made for the disinfection of bedding at the Isolation Hospital, Wincanton.

Sanitary Accommodation. One vault closet has been replaced by an earth closet and three earth closets have been replaced by water closets. Thirteen new water closets have been constructed.

The arrangements for the regular cleansing of pail closets at certain of the requisitioned houses have been continued.

House Refuse Collections are made weekly in Bruton and Wincanton; fortnightly in Castle Cary and Ansford and monthly in Henstridge, Milborne Port, Queen Camel and Templecombe. The methods of collection and of disposal remain unsatisfactory.

Salvage. The salvage scheme continued to yield satisfactory results during the year, the collections being kept separate from those of house refuse. The sales results were as follows, the corresponding figures for last year being given in brackets :

	Tons.	Value—£.
Paper	190 (160)	1,230 (830)
Iron	92 (104)	221 (195)
Tins	162 (101)	126 (99)
Non-ferrous Metals	2 (3)	38 (70)
Textiles	16 (9)	229 (112)
Bottles, etc.	4 (22)	29 (105)
Bones	15 (15)	54 (52)
Rubber	23 (—)	35 (—)
Miscellaneous	16 (5)	41 (13)
	520 (419)	2,003 (1,476)

There has been a tendency on the part of the householder to co-operate more in this important work although there is room for a great deal more improvement. I am pleased to tell you that it is now the exception rather than the rule for large quantities of salvage to be deposited by Army units at refuse dumps, although a certain amount of refuse is deposited at Salvage Depots.

Public Health Act, 1936. Four Statutory notices have been served dealing with a cesspool, the drainage of five houses and a filthy dwellinghouse. Two of these have been complied with. In the other two cases, the owners have attempted to comply with the notices, but have been unable to do so owing to shortage of labour.

Informal action has been taken in Sixty-six cases with satisfactory results in Forty-four of these.

Milk Supplies.

700 samples have been taken as follows—

Tuberculin Tested—154 of which 107 were satisfactory and five were delayed in transit.

Accredited—495 of which 259 were satisfactory and 22 were delayed in transit.

Milk tested for presence of Tubercle Bacilli—46, of which 3 showed positive results.

Pasteurised—5—all satisfactory.

Although 72% of samples of Tuberculin Tested milk were satisfactory, the percentage in the case of Accredited milk was only 55. The Council have urged the County Council to take firm action against the unsatisfactory Producers.

The number of T.T. licences increased from thirty-six on January 1st to 37 on December 31st, while the number of Accredited licences decreased from 120 to 117.

One licence to pasteurise was granted to Messrs. Dried Milk Products Ltd. A licence to retail pasteurised milk has been granted to the Yeovil Co-operative Society Ltd.

Very few structural improvements of premises have been effected but attention has been given to the Articles of the Order concerning cleanliness.

The greater proportion of the best and safest milk, the tuberculin tested milk, is not retailed as such but is delivered to factories where it is mixed with ordinary milk and usually heat treated.

Meat and Food Inspection.

Only two slaughterhouses are at present in operation. These are attached to the two bacon factories at Bruton where 7,408 pigs have been inspected. The chief condemnations were 5 carcases, one side, 537 heads, 178 plucks principally owing to Tuberculosis. Full details of condemnations are retained for record purposes. It is interesting to note that the percentage of carcases affected in some part with Tuberculosis was 7.3, exactly the same figure as was recorded last year.

By arrangement with the Ministry of Food, inspections of tinned food have been made at various Depots. The inspection of food at retail shops, etc. has been continued but no notices requiring structural alterations have been served. The quantity of food, inclusive of meat, condemned during the year amounted to about six and one half tons. A large proportion of this was disposed of for pig food.

Plans. Thirty-two plans have been presented. Of these twenty-nine have been approved and three disapproved.

Rats and Mice (Destruction) Acts. The inspection of premises under the above Acts has been continued but no prosecutions have been found necessary.

Food.—Gas Decontamination Service. As Food Decontamination Officer I have organised a squad of volunteers to act if required. These men have attended a gas course. Some of the protective equipment has been supplied. For general equipment, it is intended to rely on borrowing and improvisation as the purchase of equipment sufficient for all emergencies would be extremely wasteful of essential war material. Although the squad is not yet up to full strength, I have every reason to anticipate that this will be attained shortly. The squad should have a unit establishment of ten and a personnel establishment of twenty.

Buildings reserved for the airing of food are—

Racecourse Stands, Wincanton.

Sparkford and Wincanton Markets.

In addition, two tents have been earmarked.

Emergency Mortuary Accommodation. Adequate arrangements have been made for emergency mortuaries with Superintendents covering each of the six areas. Equipment has been supplied.

District.	Superintendent.
Bruton, including Bruham, Pitcombe and Shepton Montague.	C. S. Taylor, Crown Inn, Bruton. Tel. 2153.
Castle Cary, including Alford, Ansford, Galhampton, Lovington and Yarlington.	W. M. Thomas, Castle Cary. Tel. 239.
Milborne Port, including Milborne Wick.	A. H. Guppy, Cannon Court Farm, Milborne Port. Tel. 257.
Sparkford, including Compton Pauncefoot, Corton Denham, North and South Barrow, North Cadbury, Queen Camel and South Cadbury.	E. M. Deacon, High Street, Queen Camel.
Templecombe, including Henstridge, Blackford, Charlton Horethorne, Holton, Horsington, Maperton and North Cheriton.	W. Moorse, Templecombe. Tel. Wincanton 2245.
Wincanton, including Charlton Musgrove, Cucklington, Bratton, Penselwood and Stoke Trister.	B. J. Chinn, South Street, Wincanton. Tel. 3275.

The mortuary for gas contaminated bodies is a building at Sparkford Market.

Full details of the scheme have been supplied to the Police and the Divisional Warden.

On the occasion of two incidents in the district this service was called upon to act and functioned satisfactorily.

I am, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

R. G. GRAY.

CASTLE CARY,
SOMERSET,
February 2nd, 1943.

To T. E. COULSON, ESQ., M.D., F.R.C.S.E.,
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,
WINCANTON.

SIR,

CASTLE CARY SUB-DISTRICT.

I beg to submit my Report for the year ended the 31st December, 1942.

HOUSING (RURAL WORKERS) ACTS, 1926-1938.

I have collected the annual certificates from the owners of reconstructed houses and forwarded them to the County Council with my report thereon. I have notified Mr. Gray various defects which came under my observation when calling at the houses, and he is dealing with them.

SHOPS ACT, 1934.

The owner of one Provision Shop has been requested to improve the Sanitary Convenience, otherwise no action has been taken under the Act during the year. When times are more normal various improvements are desirable at some of the Provision Shops, especially in regard to better washing facilities.

RATS AND MICE (DESTRUCTION) ACT, 1919.

A large number of rats have been destroyed during the year, but the menace is still very serious. One of the difficulties in dealing with the situation is that so many rats harbour in the banks of the rivers and smaller streams, and their runs are frequently hidden by vegetation and bushes consequently it is not easy to get at the vermin. The Somerset War Executive Committee (through their Pest Officer) are doing very useful work by fumigating many banks in the district with hydrocyanic acid gas.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938.

The Provision Shops have been visited and in cases where foods were found on sale that appeared to be unfit for human consumption, they were referred to the Salvage Officer for salvaging. Very little improvement in the condition of shops and stores has taken place owing to the scarcity of materials and labour. When the war is over it appears there will be a considerable lee-way to make up in this respect.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

The Bakehouses have been inspected. During the latter part of the Year the limewashing at some of these got into arrears owing to the lack of labour. In the exceptional circumstances the Council granted an extension of six weeks to enable the work to be carried out. Some trouble was experienced with a bakehouse which had a dilapidated ceiling and the owner was unable to obtain suitable material to enable him to construct a new ceiling. In the exceptional circumstances the Council have allowed the existing ceiling to be patched until times are more normal. At one factory the flushing arrangements to the sanitary conveniences are not satisfactory. The owners have given orders to a local firm to extend the water supply and the firm has promised to carry out the work as soon as he can obtain the necessary iron pipes. The sanitary conveniences at a tailoring workshop are not satisfactory. The owners have given orders to a local firm for the defects to be remedied and the firm in question has promised to submit a plan to the Council's Building Surveyor for approval.

I am, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

E. J. HAINE PADFIELD,

Inspector.